

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Pre-Game Activity: The 8th Grade Problem

MISSION US: "Prisoner in My Homeland"

A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR:

The following role-play is designed as an introductory activity, and should be completed before your students begin playing "Prisoner in my Homeland." Its purpose is to sensitize your students to the advantages and disadvantages of limiting civil liberties due to a perceived threat. It also helps introduce some of the arguments for and against Japanese incarceration during World War II, though it is not intended as an exact parallel.

Your students will be asked to consider whether or not to limit the freedom of 8th graders due to a perceived threat of attack on the school. As a way to protect the school community, the administration has decided to temporarily ban certain 8th grade activities, including the freedom of movement of 8th grade students between classes, the use of cell phones, all gatherings, printing materials or public speaking in opposition to the ban, and the carrying of all bags and backpacks. Students will decide whether to 1) continue a temporary ban on 8th grade freedom or 2) end the ban immediately.

The graphic organizer will help students describe the advantages and disadvantages of the 8th grade ban.

Feel free to adapt or amend the activity to best meet your curricular goals and the needs of your students.

Steps to Complete:

- 1) Distribute to your students (and/or read aloud) the background information about the 8th grade ban.
- 2) Ask your students for their immediate reactions to the question: "Does the school have a right to impose restrictions on 8th graders due to the perceived threat? Why or why not?" Accept all student answers.
- 3) Divide students into small groups of 4-5 students each. Assign each group to represent one of the following – 8th graders, 6th and 7th graders, school administrators/staff, or the general public. Ask each group to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the ban.
- 4) After students have had an opportunity to discuss their opinions, ask each group what they would recommend as the school's next step.
- 5) To extend the activity, students can share their perspectives in a debate or a mock presentation to the principal. As a homework assignment, students can also present their opinions by writing a letter to the school board or an editorial for their local newspaper.
- 6) Explain to your students that they will soon play MISSION US: "Prisoner in my Homeland," and the characters in the game will grapple with the same sorts of issues and problems presented in their discussions around civil liberties. However, the characters and setting of the game depict real people in a very real place and time: Japanese Americans during World War II.

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ATTENTION ALL 8TH GRADERS!

Background Information:

Last week 8th graders in a neighboring district carried out a widespread graffiti attack on public buildings in our area. We do not know how many 8th graders were involved or their motives for the attack. Due to the nature of the attack and the belief it was not an isolated incident, all adjacent school districts have decided to take action. We believe protecting our school community is of the utmost importance and want to ensure all students are safe. As a cautionary measure, we are imposing an immediate ban on 8th grade activities that could endanger our school. The following rules are now in effect:

- All 8th grade students are to stay in one classroom throughout the day. Teachers will move from class to class, but all 8th grade students must stay in their homeroom for the entire school day. No exceptions.
- All cell phones belonging to 8th graders will be collected upon arrival at school and returned at the end of the day.
- All school assemblies, performances, practices, and games are cancelled until further notice.
- All 8th graders must come to school without a bag or backpack of any kind. Only a wallet with ID and money will be allowed into the building. Cell phones will be left at the door, as already noted.
- All field trips are cancelled.
- No public speaking or gathering outside of school in protest of 8th grade restrictions will be allowed.
- Printing or distributing posters or flyers that oppose the restrictions is prohibited.

In addition to the ban, all 8th graders will be subject to questioning by school authorities to help identify students who could serve as leaders of any organizing of future attacks and to help ascertain the level of risk to our community.

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We ask that the entire school community, including our younger students in 6th and 7th grade, remain vigilant and aware of your surroundings. Please report any suspicious behavior to the main office immediately.

This ban will remain in effect until we feel the threat has passed. Please cooperate with school staff and safety agents as we do what we think is best to keep our community safe.

DEBATE: *Should the school administration maintain current limits on 8th grade freedom until the threat of attack has passed?*

I represent (circle one):

8th Graders 6th/7th Graders School Administrators/Staff General Public

ADVANTAGES of a temporary ban on 8th grade freedom	DISADVANTAGES of a temporary ban on 8th grade freedom

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Should the school administration maintain current limits on 8th grade freedom until the threat of an attack has passed?

Our recommendation:

- Continue ban indefinitely
- Continue ban with changes
- End ban immediately

Explanation of reason(s) for your decision: